EC&I 809 Reading Response #4 (Chapters 5 & 6)

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**What is the Management-Oriented evaluation approach?**

* Considers the decision maker’s concerns, informational needs, and criteria for effectiveness when developing the evaluation
* Highlights different levels of decisions and decision makers and clarifies who will use the evaluation results, how they will be used and what aspect(s) of the system are decisions being made for

**Who were the key developers of the Management-Oriented Approach and what were their contributions?**

* Stufflebeam (mid 1960’s) – built on management theory and concepts developed from earlier work from educational leaders (Henry Bernard, Horace Mann, William Torey Harrris, Carleton Washburne)
* Made the decision(s) of program managers the pivotal organizer for the evaluation rather than program objectives
* CIPP Evaluation Model –framework to serve with four different kinds of decisions
  + Context evaluation- (planning decisions) – helps define objectives and what the needs are for the program under evaluation
  + Input evaluation – (structuring decisions) – what resources are available, alternative strategies could be used
  + Process evaluation – (implementing decisions) – how well is the plan implemented, barriers to success, necessary revisions
  + Product evaluation – (recycling decisions) – what results were obtained?, decisions about the future of the program
* UCLA Evaluation Model – (Alkin) parallels some aspects of the CIPP model
  + Model includes five types of evaluations: systems assessment, program planning, program implementation, program improvement, program certification
  + Four assumptions about evaluation: evaluation is a process of gathering information, information collected will be used mainly to make decisions about alternative courses of action, evaluation information should be presented to the decision maker in a form that he/she can use effectively and that is designed to help rather than confuse or mislead, different kinds of decisions require different kinds of evaluation procedures
* Stufflebeam advanced the procedure for conducting a *context evaluation* with his guidelines for designing a needs assessment for an educational program/activity
* Reinhard developed a guide for use in *input evaluation* called advocate team technique (used when acceptable alternatives for designing a new program are not available – it creates alternative new designs that are then evaluated
* Cronbach – provided useful suggestions for the conduct of *process evaluation*
* Provus’ Discrepancy Evaluation Model – some aspects are directed toward serving the information needs of educational program managers
  + Close parallels to the CIPP and UCLA models in the sensitivity to the various decisions managers need to make at each stage of program development
* Patton – utilization-focused evaluation approach
  + Stressed the process of identifying and organizing relevant decision makers and information users is the first step in evaluation
  + Use of evaluation findings requires that decision makers determine what information is needed by various people and arrange for that information to be collected and provided to them
* Wholey – focused on working with management and has concentrated on the practical uses of evaluation in public administration settings

**What are the strengths and limitations of this evaluation approach?**

* Greatest strengths – gives focus to the evaluation, stresses the importance of the utility of information and is a useful guide to program improvement
* Used for accountability purposes and provides a record keeping framework
* Focusing on the decisions prevents the evaluator from pursuing lines of inquiry that are not of interest to the decision makers
* Was instrumental in showing evaluators and program managers that they need not wait until an activity or program has run its course before evaluating it
* Stresses the timely use of feedback by decision makers
* Programs that lack decisive leadership are not likely to benefit from this approach
* Mismatch between the evaluators ad decision makers concerns and questions
* Gives preference to top management (evaluator can be considered a “hired gun”)
* Disenfranchises other stakeholders who have less power and resources
* If followed in its entirety can result in costly and complex evaluations
* Evaluator needs to be realistic about what work is possible and not make promises that cannot be reached
* Assumes that important decisions can be clearly identified in advance, that clear decision alternatives can be specified, and that the decisions to be served remain reasonably stable while the evaluation is being done

**What is the Consumer-Oriented evaluation approach?**

* Is predominantly a summative evaluation approach
* Approach has been promoted by independent agencies or individuals who compile information on educational or other human services products (ex. curriculum packages, workshops, instructional media, etc.)
* Checklists and criteria proposed by “watchdog” agencies have become tools for formative evaluation of products still being developed

**Who were the developers of this approach and what were their contributions?**

* First recognized the need in mid- and late 1960’s with new educational products coming out into the market
* Scriven – made distinctions between formative and summative evaluations
  + Suggested criteria for evaluating any educational product (ex. Costs, moral considerations, follow up results, etc.)
  + Produced a product checklist which was commissioned by the federal government

**What are the strengths and limitations of this evaluation approach?**

* Consumers have become more aware of commercial sales ploys and are less vulnerable to sales tactics
* Very seldom do corporations spend the time or money needed to acquire acceptable information about their products’ performance
* Can increase the cost of the products
* Use of stringent standards in product development and purchase may suppress creativity because of the risk involved
* Threatens local initiative development because local practitioners may become increasingly dependent on outside products and consumer services

**Part II – Reflection**

As I read further into program evaluation I find the various approaches very applicable in my profession but also complex. I struggle with wrapping my head around the idea of program evaluation as I keep looking at this in terms of the evaluations that I have been a part of. I also feel that there is a lot of overlap between these approaches in our system. Am I wrong in this assumption? In reality, how much overlap is there in the education field between the different evaluation approaches? I look forward to reading further into the other methods to examine their impact on the profession and my role.

I believe that the management-oriented approach is quite prevalent in our education system. A key to this method is that it provides accountability to the public. The population decline in rural Saskatchewan has put a strain on rural schools and their ability to offer programs. Locally, this scrutiny has led to school closures or at least the discontinuance of some grades in favor of those students attending classes at larger schools in neighboring communities. I can see how a school board would opt in favor of this evaluation approach to examine what futures exist for programs. Although it may not serve the best needs of all of the stakeholders, it would serve the needs of our local boards, division office personnel or in some cases school administration.

I find as we go through a renewal process in the math curriculum the consumer-oriented evaluation approach catches my attention. Having taken part in some of the publishers’ surveys, I am curious as to what effect those comments have on the end resource. I am also curious as to how much of the checklists or criteria our province insists upon before approving the new textbooks and resources being implemented. I would think that it is in the best interests of the publishing companies to spend the time and money to seek opinions and approval of the consumers (mainly teachers) to ensure that they will corner the marketplace for their new textbooks, but if there are only a couple of publishers working on resources, would there be more scrutiny if there was more competition.

One of the strengths of the management-oriented evaluation approach is that it shows evaluators and program managers that they do not need to wait until an activity or program has run its course before evaluating it. Over the past semester we implemented a new program at our school to provide an option for students to complete some courses in a tutorial type environment. It is too bad I hadn’t started this class sooner and taken the time to examine the feasibility and success of the program from an evaluator’s perspective. I think it would have been an interesting experience to view the program’s impact and whether it reached the goals that were set from it, as the program ran its course.